

The Portuguese press is anyway very careful with commentaries of a foreign-political nature; this applies not only to the press but also to public opinion. They actually do not prefer either of the two warring camps. The main thing for most Portuguese is that Salazar keeps them out of the war. What is happening on the European war theaters is of minor importance.

As a result of centuries of good relations, England holds a special position in Portugal's attitude. But the sympathies for England are more of a historical and economic nature than political or conditioned by war events. On the other hand, there are many indications to prove that Portugal is by no means anti-German. No newspaper would dare to write against Germany. From a foreign-political view, England's progress is observed with greater interest than that of Germany, as has been confirmed by the case of the Azores. But, from a domestic point of view, the Portuguese show unmistakably greater interest in Germany. Indeed, they seem to have taken Germany as an example in various respects, as, for instance, in the organization of the government's power and in youth education. At any rate, Salazar's government tries to maintain as even and impartial relations as possible with the Allies—except for Russia—as well as with Germany, difficult as this may sometimes prove to be.

A happy people, indeed, that does not get excited over this terrible world in arms. For someone who has been transferred here from other parts of tortured Europe, this calm is almost intolerable. At first one finds it difficult to become accustomed to it, but after a time it feels like a balm. A complete adjustment to it, however, seems for the time being out of the question, as far as I am concerned.

Lisbon is today probably the calmest city in Europe. Will it remain so? Do the people in Lisbon really feel the war? Psychologically, hardly; economically, above all,

by the increasing rise in prices. The shops are full of goods, it is true, and almost everything can be obtained as in peace time. One cannot speak of an actual rationing system; some important foodstuffs such as oil, butter, and flour are scarce. On account of the shortage of gasoline, private cars can only be driven on Wednesdays and Saturdays; on the other hand, after a short restriction, taxis are plentiful. The railways are suffering from coal shortage, and locomotives are being driven with wood. As a precautionary measure, railway traffic has been curtailed: at present only three pairs of express trains are running in Portugal per week.

It cannot be claimed, however, that these restrictions have brought the war home very acutely to the Portuguese. But the goods in the shops have become very expensive; prices have been rising steadily for two years, and there seem to be no indications of a price stop. Lisbon has become one of the most expensive cities in Europe. It is one of the most remarkable facts of this war that life in the belligerent countries is cheaper than in those which are still at peace.

When one has but recently had to see how the terrible power of war has reduced hundreds of houses in no time at all to rubble and ashes; when one has but recently had to pass rows of burning houses with a damp handkerchief before one's eyes as a protection against the thick black smoke of vast conflagrations, one stops, amazed, in Lisbon's newest *avenidas* and observes incredulously the work of hundreds of workmen employed on the building of huge blocks of houses. In Lisbon's suburbs, new groups of buildings are going up which, in their somewhat monotonous uniformity, remind one of America but which do full credit to the progressive spirit of Lisbon's architects. However, the apartments in these large and comfortably furnished houses are generally very expensive.

Indeed, Lisbon's atmosphere is a strange one.—E. Th.

## LIFE IN FINLAND

By Lennart F. Strid

*The following report, which has just reached us from Helsinki via Switzerland, describes conditions in Helsinki as they were last autumn.—K.M.*

**I**N a country which is dependent on imports to such a degree as Finland, war must naturally endanger the normal supply of

foodstuffs. Sweden was in a similar position when the blockade began, but she has managed to come to terms with both bel-

ligerent camps and to organize a certain amount of shipping, which has done much to alleviate her situation. For Finland, however, there is no such solution; the country must be satisfied with its own products and with those imports it can manage to obtain from Sweden, Denmark, and the Axis countries. As a result, rations are small, and each day presents the Finnish housewife with new and difficult problems.

Children and laborers receive the largest rations. Children get from 150 to 300 grams of bread a day, laborers from 300 to 500 grams according to their jobs, while other people must manage on 250 grams. The normal fat ration is 500 grams a month; children get 700 grams, laborers from 600 to 700 grams, and pregnant women and nursing mothers 1,100 grams.

Sugar is scarce, and the monthly ration is only 500 grams. A necessary regulation, which is hard on smokers, reduces the latter's sugar ration even further. In Sweden one may choose between tobacco and coffee; the moderate smoker still gets a little coffee, and the heavy smoker gets none. In Finland, however, there is no coffee at all. The Finn can choose between sugar and tobacco, and it is only natural that this should often lead to marital disputes.

In contrast to Sweden, milk, too, is rationed in Finland. The idea was, of course, above all to provide the children with sufficient milk; thus a child in its first year gets one liter of milk every day, and those from one to sixteen get six tenths of a liter. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are entitled to the same quantity. Meat rations amount normally to 430 grams a month; laborers get 650 grams, and people with exceptionally strenuous jobs 850 grams.

In the country, the scarcity is, of course, never as serious as in the towns. Here and there the farmers have white bread on their tables, while the town dwellers must be content with black bread. In the same way, the farmers can improve their ration diet

with products not accessible to the urban population.

One circumstance that may perhaps somewhat ameliorate Finland's food situation is the apparently good harvest. For the first time in many years, Finland had enough seed this year. But a rich harvest must also be brought in, and this immediately raises the problem of farm hands. This year the farmers need approximately 100,000 more workers than last year; to fill this requirement it has been necessary to call up young people between fifteen and seventeen years of age, mostly girls, for work on the land, and, in addition, to call up for voluntary service such persons as are otherwise too young or too old to work. And it is not only the harvest which is crying out for workers. Even in peace time, the Finnish forests employed some 200,000 people; today this number is not available, while the demand for timber has increased. In the winter of 1942/43, the authorities succeeded in mustering sufficient hands; but many of these had never in their lives swung an ax so that the actual work done was far from satisfactory. As late as in June 1943, there were still 62,000 people, among them some 8,000 women, working in the forests.

Reconstruction and building activities as a whole must wait till the war is over. The latter is limited exclusively to military objects. Those who wish to build anything else must hand in an application which is only granted in the case of absolute necessity. What little work of reconstruction is being carried out is limited almost entirely to the province of Karelia, liberated from Soviet rule.

Some farms, especially those in southwestern Finland, have obtained the working hands they urgently required in the shape of refugees from the war zone around Leningrad. These refugees used to live in the villages at the front and suffered not only from hunger and cold but also from shells and bullets whistling through the narrow streets of their villages. They speak a Finnish dialect and have proved themselves to be quick, capable workers.